

Geoff Anthony back in style

Wycombe W. 6, Southend 1

WELSH international Geoff Anthony, who left Wycombe two years ago to play for Slough Town, returned to his former club last night (Monday) and hit the first two goals in an excellent 6-1 triumph over Third Division Southend United. The professionals, with all but two first team men on show, were well and truly crushed by some of Wanderers' best football this year (*writes Stuart Earp*).

Anthony quit Slough about a month ago and has since been training with Wycombe. Although playing only Sunday football until the start of next season, Geoff was given the chance of a game in this friendly and delighted the sparse crowd with a vintage display of his own characteristic skills. After this performance, he would surely be a great asset to the club next season.

But the Welshman wasn't the only success story of the night. Steve Perrin, out of the side recently, was right back en song with two fine goals while centre forward Keith Searle had a marvellous game, laying the ball off time and again to perfection.

Overall, this display by Wycombe must put them in entirely the right frame of mind for their important Isthmian League matches in the next fortnight. And if they reproduce this sort of form, the other contenders simply won't live with them. Southend really had no answer to their attacking skills — fast, accurate football that carved massive openings in their defence — and that, in the face of a strong wind and bone hard pitch.

There's not much doubt Southend were not really pulling out all the stops, apart from a spell just after half time. Their defence was creaky without regular centre half Guthrie, who recently signed for Sheffield United. His stand-in, Alan Moody, had a nightmare game

and was beaten by Anthony after just five minutes when Geoff jinked past him and planted the ball wide of Malcolm Webster.

As Terry Reardon began to work wonders in midfield and with Searle finding his fellow front men superbly, Wycombe dominated. At the back Dave Bullock was immaculate and demonstrated Wanderers' wealth of talent in defence. Webster saved at point blank range from Perrin and Searle before Anthony nipped in for the second goal after 44 minutes following a 1-2 between Mick Holifield and Perrin.

Despite three half time changes, the Blues were even better after the break. In the 52nd minute Anthony made the third goal by harassing Moody into a poor back pass. Perrin intercepted, ran wide and pulled the ball back over the line. Ten minutes later Dave Worthington broke through to reduce the arrears, finishing the goal with a somersault. Later in the match he was about to repeat the entertainment but just managed to stop himself when the 'goal' was ruled out for offside!

Goal number four came in the 77th minute when Gary Hand, who had another excellent game, crossed into the box for Perrin to lash the ball past Webster. Then eight minutes later Bullock capped a fine game by outleaping the defence to head home unmarked from Alexander's free kick.

The final goal was probably the best of the six. Alexander rode a stiff tackle, beat two defenders and then placed a brilliant through ball into the path of Howard Kennedy who had run intelligently into position. Taking the ball on, Howard gave Webster no chance with a perfect finish to complete a thoroughly entertaining game.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Birdseye, D. Bullock, A. Phillips, G. Hand; M. Holifield (sub K. Mead 45 mins), T. Reardon (sub H. Kennedy 45 mins), D. Alexander; G. Anthony, K. Searle (sub D. Evans 45 mins), S. Perrin.

SOUTHEND: M. Webster; D. Worthington, S. Dyer, A. Moody, A. Niven; A. Ford, R. Pountney, S. Brace; J. Hazell, S. Lamb, D. Cunningham (sub G. Byford 45 mins).

Referee: J. Allen (Bourne End).

Half time: 2-0. **Goal scorers:** Wycombe — Anthony 2 (5, 44), Perrin 2 (52, 77), Bullock (85), Kennedy (88). Southend — Worthington (62).

WITH no less than eight of their scheduled players pulling out, the Rothmans Hellenic League found their Northern League counterparts too strong at Loakes Park on Friday. Two goals in each half sealed a comfortable victory for the Notherners.

Full back Paul Griffiths who is on loan to Hungerford Town from Wycombe Wanderers until the end of the season, was included in the side. Davis (Spenymoor) and Hetherington (Billingham) scored in the first half with Shoulder (Bishop Auckland) and Davis again on target in the second half.